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ABSTRACT

The paper treats career education more as a concept than as a program, an approach that cuts across all program areas and has potential for achieving many stated educational objectives. First, the term "career" is discussed, including the connotation it carries of a purposeful life pattern and of a continuous, integrating process. Second, career education is examined as a process through which an individual discovers himself, achieves a self-determined life goal, and acquires competencies necessary for achieving self-fulfillment. Third, the principles underlying the Georgia plan are outlined: (1) a comprehensive and integrated approach, (2) a developmental career education program, (3) integrated learning, (4) self development, and (5) value principles-those considered of prime importance to the career education curriculum. (Author/SES)

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THE GEORGIA PLAN FOR CAREER EDUCATION

by

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Introduction

Georgia like many other states has a plan for career education. As plans go, they often range in scope from ideas that are in the mind of one individual to a formalized written plan developed by staff that is then formally adopted and approved by the state board. Then they collect dust. Georgia's plan for career education is somewhere in between these two extremes, and I'll let you decide where. I guess I believe that career education has potential for achieving some educational objectives that recently the state board of education passed called the Superintendent's 22 missions.

One of the state board missions is career education. The mission is "to extend career education to all elementary and high school pupils through appropriate curriculum modifications." This statement represents the state board of education's commitment to career education. Therefore, the Georgia plan for career education I will present is as we see it being in the state.

I view career education more as a concept than as a program. Whereas vocational education or special education are viewed as efforts that are fundable, manageable, and accountable, career education is viewed as an approach, a set to education, that cuts across all program areas and has considerable potential for achieving our often stated educational objectives.

In presenting the Georgia plan for career education, we will consider the following questions:

1. What is meant by the word "career"?
2. What is career education?
3. What are the major principles underlying the Georgia plan for career education?
4. What does an operational program look like?
5. What is the current status of career education?
6. What might be possible future directions?

To answer these questions in addition to what's in the program, we will present a film that ties the concepts together.

Career

I interpret the term "career" to mean that one has a purposeful life pattern. This definition connotes a concept of career that means more than pursuing an occupation, being employed or holding a job. It implies that:

1. A career is what one lives to do, rather than what one does to live;
2. A career is that mission in life which serves as an integrative factor to other arenas of one's life;
3. A career may or may not be a paid activity, it could represent voluntary work;
4. Career does not denote a given educational level, a career may require considerable preparation and skill or it may require little training and skill; and

5. A career would include the continued choices an individual has to make throughout his life regarding education, employment, or voluntary work, and of relating individual decisions to existing, intermediate, and distant opinion.

Second, if the term "career" connotes a more purposeful life pattern than what is meant by career education, to me "career education" is a range of educational processes that focus upon facilitating the individual's achievement of his own life planning and fulfillment. It is the process through which each individual discovers himself, achieves a self determined life goal, and acquired competencies necessary for achieving his self fulfillment.

Third, what are the major principles underlying the Georgia plan?

1. Comprehensive and integrated approach.
   a. Comprehensive and integrated approach to career education.
   b. Strength of general education, vocational education, and guidance in a sequential, comprehensive, and integrated program for each educational level (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12, and post secondary).
   c. It seems likely that the task of career education can best be accomplished by leadership teams composed of vocational educators, counselors and academic teachers.
   d. The approach stresses broad concepts essential to the facilitation of self development. These concepts include:

1) Developing a positive self concept

2) Developing interpersonal and basic skills

3) Developing awareness of the career decision making process

4) Developing a sense of community involvement

5) Developing a sense of agency or destiny control

6) Developing work attitudes and worker discipline

7) Developing employment seeking skills

8) Integrating self knowledge with environmental knowledge

e. The overall thrust is the development of individuals as they interact with the environment of the family, school, and community so they may direct and manage their own career lives. The program is interdisciplinary melding the strengths of general education, vocational education, and guidance. It allows for the unique experiences of each person.

1) The academic teacher's knowledge of subject matter discipline;

2) The vocational teacher's knowledge of the work world and the "learning by doing" approach; and

3) The counselor's knowledge about the student and skills needed to humanize the learning process.

f. The comprehensive and integrative approach gives balance to learning activities that relate to cognitive, psychomotor, and affective situations. It offers each student the opportunity to clarify his feelings, motives, and desires based on

experiences that are closely tied to the real world. Acquiring environmental and self information together in interaction should result in more accurate and effective learning than if they are acquired separately.

2. Developmental career education: A comprehensive and integrated approach to career education should be designed to facilitate the individual's mastery of career development skills.

It is important not to base the design on the assumption that the above mentioned competencies are acquired at a single point in time in sequential order.

To base the curriculum pattern on that assumption would tend to result in poorly conceived, one-shot career orientation programs tacked onto the existing vocational programs to help students make specific choices of vocational curriculums for purposes of job preparation.

Research substantiates that career development tasks are not mastered singly in sequential order at a given point in time. Instead they are mastered in a process that extends over several years--a process in which the accomplishment of one task overlaps the partial fulfillment of others. Hence, a developmental curriculum anticipates the necessity of helping students accomplish different career development tasks to varying degrees at each educational level.

3. Georgia's plan calls for integrating learning: School life for many young persons today is characterized by:

   a. Discontinuity by a series of experiences which never merge together in the development of a meaningful sense of self.

   b. The comprehensive approach to career education, "cognitive," "experiential," and "affective" learning to be integrated.

   It is important that the developing young person be provided experiences in which the knowing, doing, and feeling components progress simultaneously.

   c. The world of work and community offer a rich resource for learning. If "world of work" experiences are properly selected they can serve to facilitate the student's mastery of cognitive learning appropriate for a given grade level. Students would be allowed to make application of math, science, and communication skills in designing, planning, selling, making, organizing, repairing, and other such activities that are work related. Instead of solving hypothetical reading problems in a strict intellectual approach, students will actually use academic concepts and skills in solving a simulated or actual "real world" problem. For many students this may very well open a new vista to connect school and life. Furthermore, experiential based learning can serve to facilitate the discovery of self, provided students are given the opportunity, assistance, and encouragement needed to personalize and interpret such experiences in terms of their

own self. The comprehensive approach to career education facilitates the relating of both cognitive and experiential learning to the student's personal concerns.

4. Self development

   a. The comprehensive career education approach places a major stress on the development of the career self concept.

   b. Career education must not be limited to the traditional concepts of "awareness," "orientation," "exploration," etc. as they relate to work but must include awareness, orientation, exploration, and progressive practice in developing the career aspect of self.

   c. At each educational level, the work setting and community can be utilized to help students explore and clarify themselves. Experiences in these settings must be followed with appropriate feedback to give the student the understanding and vocabulary he will need to clearly define his career self.

   d. It is vital that the feedback allow the student to analyze the experiences rather than having these experiences analyzed by someone else.

   e. Through career education the developing young person will form and reform a picture of himself as a student and as a worker. Over time he will make finer judgments regarding his picture of himself as a student; he will also define and discriminate in greater detail his self characteristics relating to work. For example, at the elementary level one

student might describe himself as being more capable with his hands than with books. A secondary student might picture himself as better at problem solving assignments than at rote learning. He may also begin to picture himself as a person who likes, for example, to work creatively on his own with his hands. The instructional system that is proposed will give considerable emphasis to the development of the career self.

5. Value Principles: principles considered to be of prime importance to the career education curriculum are the following:

   a. To help students clarify their own values.

   b. To help students consider the "social," "economic," and "personal" significance of work.

   c. Enable the student o develop his abilities to analyze the work world.

   d. Broaden student's perception of options available by aiding him to penetrate occupations that have traditionally been barred from consideration.

   e. Assist the student in developing skills necessary for coping with an ever changing society.

   f. Assist the student to recognize talents and uniqueness of all students.

   g. Enable students to discover unique sense of careers and vocations in a context which allows them to go beyond the limitation of their socio-economic and psychological orientation.

What is an Operational Program?

Career education is already in full swing in some Georgia schools. Elements and strategies of career education can be made operational at any school level without great financial outlay using much of what teachers already know and are doing. The strategies of career education are referred to in Georgia in terms of five program components.

1. Fusing
2. Interlocking
3. Exploratory, prevocational, vocational curriculum, 7-12
4. Guidance
5. Job placement and follow through